

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 04546 141106Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 /092 W
-----101036 141126Z /10

R 140705Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8309
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY ANKRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 4546

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PK
SUBJ: DISCUSSION OF BHUTTO'S FATE

1. WHEN I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY AFTERNOON MAY 11, I ASKED WHETHER AGHA SHAHI, DURING HIS TEHRAN SOJOURN, HAD RAISED THE QUESTION OF BHUTTO'S FATE. KHALATBARY SAID AGHA SHAHI HAD SAID "NOT A WORD". THE IRANIANS HAD EXPECTED THAT HE WOULD AT LEAST ACKNOWLEDGE IRANIAN PLEAS WHICH HAD BEEN MADE TO SPARE BHUTTO'S LIFE. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY INITIATIVE BY SHAHI, THE IRANIANS DID NOT PURSUE THE SUBJECT.

2. I TOLD KHALATBARY THAT TURKISH AMBASSADOR TOLD ME HIS GOVERNMENT HAD OFFERED TO TAKE BHUTTO IN EXILE IN TURKEY, BUT THE PAKISTANIS DID NOT APPEAR INTERESTED. KHALATBARY SAID THAT, AT ONE POINT A FEW WEEKS AGO, THE PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR HERE HAD BROACHED THE IDEA OF EXILE IN IRAN. HE HAD THEN COME BACK A FEW DAYS LATER TO SAY THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD CHANGED ITS MIND AND WAS THINKING OF EXILE FOR BHUTTO IN CHINA, WHERE HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE MORE EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED.

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3. COMMENT: ALL THIS CHATTER ABOUT EXILE FOR BHUTTO SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT ZIA IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING A COMMUTATION OF THE DEATH SENTENCE. DOES DEPARTMENT OR ISLAMABAD HAVE ANY INDICATION THAT CHINA WOULD SERIOUSLY ACCEPT BHUTTO UNDER THE TERMS THE PAKISTANIS APPARENTLY WISH TO PROPOSE?
SULLIVAN

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NNN

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